

the passerines, in all likelihood they would occur in this species. Manuel A. Plenge, of Lima, kindly agreed to collect specimens for anatomical examination. Two birds were secured on 23rd May 1969 at Playa Leon Dormido, about 85 km south of Lima. Both specimens are females with slightly enlarged ovaries. The stomach of one contained mostly fine sand with fragments of crustaceans (presumably decapods), as well as an almost microscopic bivalve. The stomach of the other also contained sand, as well as several small (5 mm) crabs, unidentifiable crustacean fragments, and a single small isopod.

The nasal glands are small, rimming the dorsal edges of the orbits in a position described by Technau (1936) as "exorbital", or type "II d" in his system of classification. Each gland is approximately 18 mm long, meaning that it edges about half of the orbit. It has a maximum width of 1.3 mm and a maximum thickness of .3 mm. The gland does not differ in gross morphology from that of other passerines, and seems to be of the same relative size as, or smaller than, exorbital glands in species which presumably do not have to cope with excessive salt loads. For example, *Cinclus cinclus*, which is approximately the same size as *Cinclodes nigrofumosus*, has a nasal gland of very similar dimensions (Technau, 1936: 595), while a specimen of House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) from Colorado, a species less than one-quarter the size of *Cinclodes nigrofumosus*, has a relatively larger gland, measuring approximately 9 mm in length and .7 and .3 mm in breadth and depth, respectively (pers. observ.). While the small size of the gland in *Cinclodes nigrofumosus*, and its morphological similarity to that of other passerines, is not conclusively indicative that it is not a salt-excreting organ, it is difficult to conceive of it as having this function when one considers the gland's enormous size and distinctive appearance in seabirds.

In contrast to the diminutive nasal gland, the Harderian gland in *Cinclodes nigrofumosus* is of a substantial size, covering about one third of the orbital wall. This is characteristic of many marine birds. Apparently the viscous secretion of the Harderian gland is produced copiously in order to protect the eye from irritation by sea water.

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Some errors concerning eggs of Somalia birds

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In examining material collected by Sir Geoffrey Archer in Somaliland some errors in identifications of eggs have become apparent.

Archer (1961) collected a clutch of three eggs in British Somaliland (Somalia) and ascribed these to the "Somaliland Cinnamon-rufous Long-billed Lark," *Mirafraga somalica* (= *Certhilauda somalica*). Lord Rothschild purchased a collection of eggs of Somaliland birds from Archer; and when this was bequeathed to the British Museum (Natural History) two clutches, a clutch of three with the set-mark 550, and a clutch of one with the set-mark 551, were registered as belonging to this species. Both were registered under the number 1941.3.5.97. The second clutch has been recently re-registered as 1951.3.5.134.

These four eggs were referred to by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1955) as the only known clutch of eggs, and breeding was stated to occur in British and Italian Somaliland. Archer (1961) assumed that this "clutch" of four differed from his earlier one of three eggs, and must therefore have come from Italian Somaliland.

Archer's description of his clutch of three would appear to tally with two of the three eggs, and the remaining single egg. His measurements appear to be slightly incorrect. In addition the colour plate in his work illustrates an alleged egg of this species (pl. 27, no. 15) which is actually the egg of a bulbul, almost certainly *Pycnonotus barbatus somaliensis*. This egg is in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History), reg. no. 1969.8.94.

Since three of the four eggs were given the set mark 550, presumably by Archer, they were therefore considered to be the clutch of three. The fourth is similarly marked 551. Of the three, two are very similar. They measure 21.8×16.7 mm and 21.8×16.2 mm. Both have a white ground colour with numerous fine markings, mostly spots or flecks of brown, reddish brown and violet, tending to be concentrated in a zone around the larger end. The other egg of the three tapers more than the other two and measures 23.4×16.4 mm. Its ground colour has a distinct greenish tint, and the markings are similar to those of the other two but light brown flecks are more in evidence. The remaining single egg is more similar in colour to the first two of the clutch of three than is the third egg of the clutch. It is narrow with a pronounced taper, and measures 23.3×15.3 mm. It has a white ground colour, the spots being sparser and more distinct, and more often rufous or light brown than on the first two. There is no distinct zone at the larger end. At present, apart from Archer's statement that he found a clutch of three, and the existence of these four eggs, concerning which there may be doubts about the division into clutches, there would appear to be a lack of data on the nest and eggs of this species.

Another problem arises concerning the identification of some crows' eggs. Two clutches taken by Archer in 1918–1920 were identified by him as *Corvus corax edithae*, a small race of the Raven, parasitised by *Clamator glandarius*, the two species being indicated by different set-marks. The eggs came to the museum through the Rothschild Collection and were registered simply as *C. c. edithae*.

A single crow egg with three cuckoo eggs, reg. no. 1941.3.5.67, collected at Ariarleh on 18th May 1920, measures 48.4×32.1 mm, and shows a marked taper towards the narrow end. The ground colour is pale blue-green and the egg is densely splashed and speckled with brown and lilac-grey markings which tend to show longitudinal elongation and are slightly concentrated towards the larger end. There are no eggs of *C. c. edithae* in the collection to which this approximates in size and markings, but it bears a close similarity to eggs of *C. rhipidurus* which also nests in Somalia, and S. A. Parker had tentatively identified the egg as belonging to that species.

The second clutch, reg. no. 1941.3.5.112, collected at Suksode on 4th June 1918, consists of two crow eggs and two cuckoo eggs. One crow egg measures 43.6×31.5 mm and has more a rounded shape than the egg in the previous clutch; while the other is damaged at one end but is very similar to the first and appears slightly larger and more rounded, having a breadth of 32.6 mm. Both eggs are pale greenish blue with sparsely distributed, large irregular markings of brown and lilac, together with more numerous very fine spots and specks. In size and markings these eggs are quite unlike those of *C. rhipidurus* and rather dissimilar to those of *C. c. edithae*. They are, however, a good match

for the eggs of *C. albus*, a tentative identification with which C. R. S. Pitman, who has had more experience of the eggs of these species, also concurs. Archer records the presence of *C. albus* in this region but regards it as an infrequent visitor. Assuming the identification is correct, this may be the first evidence of breeding in this area.

The eggs of *C. c. edithae* in the collection are rather variable in shape, but small. They are usually marked, although often very sparsely, with fine spots or thin streaks and lines. The measurements for fifteen eggs are—average 41.1×29.2 mm; maxima 43.7×29.8 , 39.1×31.8 ; minima 39.1×31.8 , 43.5×27.8 mm. It will be noted that an increase on one dimension tends to be matched by a decrease on the other.

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The Starred Bush Robin *Pogonocichla stellata* in eastern Rhodesia and adjacent Mocambique

by Michael P. Stuart Irwin

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Taxonomy

Pogonocichla stellata chirindensis (Roberts), 1914, *Ann. Transvaal Mus.*, 10: 176, with type locality Mount Selinda, has in recent years always been regarded as a synonym of *P. s. transvaalensis* (Roberts), 1912, *Journ. S. Afr. Orn. Un.*, 8: 21, described from Woodbush Forest Reserve in the north-eastern Transvaal. This is derived from the thorough revision and analysis provided by Moreau (1951: 383–400), and by Clancey (1969: 253–256), who has most recently reviewed racial variation in this species in south-eastern Africa. Clancey concluded that *chirindensis* was a synonym of *transvaalensis*, even though the Mount Selinda population was separated from that in the Transvaal highlands by over some 250 miles of ecologically unsuitable country. At this same time, however, Clancey described *P. s. hygrica*, with type locality Gorongosa Mountain in Mocambique, but also ranging southwards in the highlands of eastern Rhodesia (and by inference Mocambique), from Inyanga to the Chimanimani Mountains and Melsetter, and thus to within forty miles of the Mount Selinda population, with which there is at first sight no apparent geographical or ecological barrier.

However, it would seem that no adequate series of *chirindensis* topotypes has been collected in recent years; the majority of specimens available, and scattered among a number of museums, being those obtained by Swynnerton in the first decade of the present century. In late September and the first few days of October 1970 the writer and R. P. Borrett collected eleven specimens in the Chirinda Forest at Mount Selinda, the majority of which were then in breeding condition. Previously the only material in the National Museum of Rhodesia had been two old Swynnerton skins obtained in June 1906, another September skin collected in 1960, and one in an immature olive plumage (see Moreau, 1951: 390). When our freshly collected material was compared with twenty-nine specimens of *hygrica* from eastern Rhodesia, from the Chimanimani Mountains, and Melsetter northwards, and eight from Gorongosa Mountain, the differences separating the two populations became obvious, *hygrica* being darker, more